



SESSION 35 | JOHN 7:40-53

JOHN 7:33-53 | JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (PART 3)

- Verses 33-37 included on session 34
- Verses 38-39 – (Also included on session 34)
 - *Jesus gave a promise to those who believed on Jesus as Messiah. It was a promise of receiving the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Joel 2:28-31 and other passages.*
 - *This should not be equated either with the salvation of the soul by grace through faith nor of the beginning of the church. Rather, it is a promise of the prophets, reiterated by Jesus, about the fulfillment of prophecy just prior to the Day of the Lord.*
 - *Note that whatever is being prophesied is aligned with the Old Testament, for Jesus said, **as the scripture hath said** (v. 38). To what scripture did He make reference? Consider Isaiah 12:3, Ezekiel 47:1, Zechariah 14:8, etc. (The rabbis teach that Isaiah 12:3 are the words the priest would use in the water-pouring ceremony mentioned in verse 37).*
 - *We now know that after the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding the giving of the Spirit (Acts 2:16) and before the Day of the Lord, God "pushed pause" and initiated the church age; an age which was heretofore unforeseen and unrevealed.*
- Verses 40-42 –
 - Because of the spectacular prophetic-style announcement of **living water** (v. 38), the people began to debate His true identity.
 - They knew He was Jesus of Nazareth, but they also recognized that He must be so much more. Some even determined He was Messiah (such belief is the goal of the fourth gospel) but were confused because He was **out of Galilee** rather than from Bethlehem. Of course, in this they only had partial information. This had earlier been the same conclusion of Nathanael (Jn. 1:46).
 - Note that these people had good *Biblical knowledge* but not good *contextual knowledge* in verse 42.
- Verse 43 –
 - There is a very real sense in which there has been a **division among the people because of him** for almost all the peoples of the world for 2,000 years.
 - He has divided the measurement of time, the "Christian world" from the rest of the world, even families, communities, and people groups.
- Verses 44-46 –
 - While ultimately the reason that **no man laid hands on him** (v. 44) is the same as in verse 30, (**his hour had not yet come**), the circumstantial reason is that **the officers to the chief priests** (v. 45) simply could not bring themselves to do so, saying, **Never man spake like this man** (v. 46).
 - Take note that these officers had no doubt heard many great speakers by nature of their jobs.

- Verses 47-48 –
 - The Pharisees are concerned that Jesus is swaying the crowd by His logic and rhetoric, even being concerned that one of their own might believe. From their point of view, those who believed Jesus was the Christ were **deceived**, thus they believed Jesus to be an imposter.
 - Presumably Nicodemus (who will enter the scene again in verse 50) is *not yet* one who believes Jesus to be Messiah, for the Pharisees imply that none **of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him**. Nicodemus was said to be both a Pharisee and a ruler in John 3:1.
- Verse 49 –
 - From the Pharisees point of view, those who believed Jesus to be Messiah **knoweth not the law and are cursed**.
 - Sadly, this group had so tainted the law with their own interpretations that it was unrecognizable, and they used their own standard to judge the law.
- Verses 50-52 –
 - This is the second time we meet Nicodemus, who is always shown as a "seeker" who is following his mind. At this point he is not a follower of Jesus, but he is certainly open-minded about Jesus.
 - The Pharisees made two common errors-
 - They were unwilling to hear the facts of the case, even against their own Law and principles. (The Bereans, who were also unbelieving Jews at the time, were "more noble" because they would "search the Scriptures to see if these things are so." We cannot claim to be knowledgeable if we refuse information.
 - They did not question their assumptions. Can a prophet come from Galilee? The Christ could not *originate* from Galilee, but He could *live and minister* in Galilee. Take care to see that you do not make an assumption that is not based on reality.
- Verse 53 –
 - Beginning in 7:53, through 8:11, the words are often contested by scholars.
 - Dr. James Hamilton of Southern Seminary says John did not write this passage. He says, "Those passages do not belong in the text and should not be preached from pulpits."
 - There is a "canonical test" that must be taken seriously, or we give our Bible up to intelligentsia. The tests for New Testament Canonicity:
 - The Authority Test: Was it written by an eyewitness?
 - The Divinity Test: Does the book claim to be a revelation from God?
 - The Consistency Test: Does the book contradict previous revelation?
 - The Acceptance Test: Was the book accepted by the early church?
 - With these tests, It is safe to include this passage in the text.
 - Note Scofield's remark at 7:53.
 - See also Bibliotheca Sacra 136, article by Zane Hodges, who says, "The most that could safely be said is that *it is possible* that between a.d. 200 and 400 more manuscripts were written in Egypt without the pericope than were written with it. But even here, as any statistician would know, the inference merits little confidence."